

**REGULAR NORTH PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MARCH 26, 2008**

The North Providence School Committee met on March 26, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in the Library at the High School. Members present were Chairman Martinelli, Mr. DaSilva, Mr. Marciano, Mr. Cataldi, Mr. Martinelli, Mr. Iannetta, and Mr. Palmieri. Also present was Superintendent Ottaviano and Mr. Scungio. Ms. Celona, Dr. Gerardi, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Milazzo were present for the regular session only.

Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to recess the regular session and go into Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Administrator/Technology Contracts, Personnel Issues, and Use of Legal Counsel.

The meeting reconvened at 6:35 p.m. It began by saluting the flag. Next, Chairman Martinelli asked for a moment of silence.

Next was the Chair to Report Out Any Votes Taken In Executive Session. Chairman Martinelli reported that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

Next was Correspondence. There being none, the next Item on the Agenda was Superintendent's Report. First was Student/Student Athlete Recognition. Superintendent Ottaviano read the names of the Girls Freshman Basketball Team State Champions. Members of the

teams received certificates of recognition and congratulations. Stephanie Coro received special recognition as the leading scorer. Next was the High School Cheerleaders. Members of the team received certificates of recognition and congratulations. Next, Susan Bennett and Kathy Lisi were given certificates of recognition and congratulations as advisors for the LifeSmart Consumer awards. The members received certificates of recognition and congratulations. Mrs. Reall added that it usually falls to her to congratulate everyone and tell the students how beautiful or handsome they are and to excuse them from the meeting. Mr. Iannetta offered his congratulations to the students and the advisors who received certificates and spoke about working with people on LifeSmarts and felt that they are the pride of the community. He thanked them for their commitment to the High School.

Next, Mr. Marciano requested that as a courtesy, if there were no objection, he would propose that the Mayor's Request to Address the Committee Regarding the Maintenance/Insurance/Greystone Playground be moved up on the Agenda. Mayor Lombardi began by stating that he would like to make it perfectly clear that the Mayor's office is open and accessible to any resident at any time. The reason that he is addressing the Committee is because of communication related to the maintenance of fields and grounds. He spoke about communication from his office dated September 4th resulting in a meeting with Mr. Cataldi, Mr. Milazzo and Dick Fossa. It was always their opinion that that one department should manage and maintain

use of the athletic fields. He spoke about his mindset as owner of a dry cleaner and car wash. Should each pay for the other. The School Department pays the Town an amount of money to maintain fields. It was always the School Department that maintained the fields and feels that the School Department should maintain and control the fields. After the meeting, it was decided that the School Department and the Town could get together and the Town would continue to maintain the fields. He felt that everyone should have a copy of the communication. He never said that he would not maintain the facilities. When you look at the Charter, (he read Powers and Duties portion of the Charter) it speaks about the duties and responsibilities and the fact that the School Department will pay for the cost of the maintenance and that the Town will bill the cost to accurately reflect the time and expense. He spoke about the fact that he understands that the School Department is autonomous and he is not trying to take that away. He added that he is upset that the issue was communicated through the media. Chairman Martinelli explained his version of the events. He spoke about this being an issue of contention back in September when the letter was written. The School Department was notified that the Town was not satisfied with the money it was receiving for the fields and grounds. When the Director of Finance and Superintendent met with the Mayor's office a month ago, the issue came up again that the Town was not satisfied with the amount of money that you were getting. The School Department was notified by the Administration that the Department of public works was not going to maintain the fields and grounds. A call

was made to the Mayor's office to address the issue and the call was not returned. It was a matter of contention and there was a discrepancy with the amount of money. The School Department was also not given any information that the Town cut down 200-year-old trees at the baseball field. You said that you had no knowledge about that the fact that the tree warden, Mr. Sepe, who is the husband of Mrs. Sepe, who works in your office, was contacting Northeast Tree Cutting, another relative of the tree warden and Mrs. Sepe from your office, relative to cutting down trees. Mayor Lombardi interjected to state that when the School Department called the Mayor's office, he was out of town and that is why he did not return the call. He spoke about his disappointment with the fact that he made one call and then held a press conference. Mr. Fossa also spoke about the meeting with Mr. Milazzo and Mr. Cataldi and Mr. DaSilva back in August. He felt that Mr. Martinelli has the same responsibilities as Chairman as he had as a normal school committee person. He accused Mr. Martinelli of being "all wet" and trying to say things that are not true. He told Mr. Martinelli to prove that the Mayor knew the trees were being cut down. Mr. Marciano interjected to say that there is obviously a breakdown in communication. Since the Town is taking care of the fields, what is the argument? Mayor Lombardi stated that the Town is going to work with the School Department on the issue and until that time, the School Department will enjoy the maintenance of the fields. Mr. Marciano added that he felt that we need to keep this on a higher level and that we can agree to disagree, but it is important to work as a team. Heated discussion also took place with

respect to the sanding issue and Chairman Martinelli spoke about the fact that the Town did not sand the school lots and people fell. Mr. Cataldi spoke up to clarify the series of meetings that he had with the Mayor's office and what the Mayor and Dick Fossa said was true. The School Department was told that the Town would continue to take care of the grounds for the rest of the fiscal year. He also stated that any comments that were made in the paper were not made on behalf of the whole committee and were that of the chairman. Mr. Palmieri stated that he is appalled at what he is witnessing here tonight. He spoke about the fact that regardless of the cost of the maintenance, the School Department does not have taxing power and when the Mayor's office says that it will cost the School Department more money, where is the money supposed to come from? Mrs. Reall stated that we have gone about as far as we can go and no one speaks for her. Everyone speaks for himself or herself. Mr. DaSilva added that it used to be one big happy family.

He spoke about the fact that the recreation department is not charged for use of property because it is like a community center. It is one big Town and it is meant for the citizens. Mr. Iannetta felt that this is a very resolvable issue. Right now, the Mayor's office will maintain the fields at the number it said it would and feels that the finance subcommittee should get together with the Mayor's office. He also suggested that the Mayor's office be given a copy of the Use of Property so that they know what is going on.

Next was the 2008/2009 School Calendar. Superintendent Ottaviano

**recommended approval of the 2008/2009 School Calendar and added that the calendar has 182 instructional days in the 08/09 school years. There will be a staggered start at the high school – 9th graders on the first day, 10-12th graders on the day after. Once the calendar is approved, it will be forwarded to the State.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the 2008/2009 School Calendar as presented.**

**Next was Field Trip Requests. Dr. Gerardi read the Requests and recommended approval of the Requests submitted as per School Committee policy.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the Field Trip Request as submitted.**

**Next was Home Schooling. There being no requests, next on the Agenda was the Maxim Contract. Mrs. Celona informed the members that the proposed contract is for the nurses on the bus. The contract was sent to legal and some changes were made.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the Maxim Contract as presented.**

**Mr. DaSilva asked Mrs. Celona if this contract is strictly for nurses on busses. Mrs. Celona stated that is only for the nurses on the busses.**

**It went out to bid and was approved.**

**Next was the Monthly Financial Report. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the Monthly Financial Report as submitted.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the Monthly Financial Report as submitted.**

**Next was the State Assessment Scores. Dr. Gerardi gave a presentation about the test scores and the goal to use the scores as an assessment to improve instruction. He compared the percentages in each area and focused on the NECAP Mean Scaled Score Growth.**

**Next was Tenure. Superintendent Ottaviano read the list as submitted in the packets and recommended that the teachers be granted tenure.**

**Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to grant tenure to the list of teachers as submitted in the packets and read by the Superintendent.**

**Chairman Martinelli asked the teachers to stand and offered congratulations on behalf of the Committee.**

**Next was the Uniform Chart of Accounts. Mr. DaSilva spoke about the fact that Mr. Duffy was at the last meeting to discuss the Funding**

formula. He asked Mrs. Celona to review the Chart of Accounts Executive Overview. Mrs. Celona explained that it was brought about by the legislature four years ago by Paul Crowley. It is a method of accounting that all the school departments and charter schools will implement and the system will enable the districts to compare costs through tracking account codes. She gave a PowerPoint Presentation explaining the program features. Mr. DaSilva thanked Mrs. Celona for her presentation.

Next was School Committee Reports. First was the Personnel Subcommittee Report.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mr. Marciano and carried to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee on the 1033 Posting. Mr. Cataldi voted nay on this motion. The motion carried by a vote of 6 to 1.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mr. Marciano and carried to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee on the Administrator/Technology Contracts.

Next was Full Day Kindergarten. Mr. Palmieri stated that he feels like he is starting to sound like a broken record. He talked about the Superintendent's budget and the hour presentation on the busses and the Birchwood gate. He felt that perhaps if there was a crowd of people hammering about full day kindergarten, then you would guarantee a full day



kindergarten. He asked Bob Morris to address the Committee. Mr. Morris agreed with Mr. Palmieri. A full day kindergarten helps the children to spend more time on language arts and math. The Department of Education reported that full day kindergarten children had more positive behaviors than 1/2 day kindergarten children. Next, Mr. DaSilva spoke about the national research showing that there is an erosion of the benefits of full day kindergarten and the research shows that there are no long-term gains. He felt that the Committee needs to have proof that the benefits are long term. Mr. Cataldi added that he spoke with two teachers in North Smithfield that have a full day kindergarten and the fact that they are not going to continue the program. Next Gina Picard spoke about the fact that she has been talking about full day kindergarten for two years. There is research on both sides. However, the research shows that full day kindergarten is fundamental. Mr. Floriani also spoke about the studies from Michigan and California. He felt that it is important to give the kids some fundamentals in the arts and the fact that the children in the pm kindergarten should not be deprived of the same education that the kids in the morning kindergarten are getting. Mr. DaSilva added that he never said he is against full day kindergarten. However, he wants to know more about it first. He spoke about donating his stipend every year to scholarships and student activities. To say that he does not care about the children in the Town is disingenuous. Mr. Aiello identified himself and spoke about the fact that he thought that kindergarten was part time so that they could get used to some structure.

**Next was the Letter from Colleague. Mr. Palmieri spoke about the letter that Mr. Martinelli received from Mr. DaSilva addressing the baseball field issue of in kind services by the four leagues and all the volunteers and did not want the use of property to be held up. Mr. DaSilva talked about the fact that the comments were not meant to be sarcastic. The purpose was to explain that the use of property was never held up.**

**Next was Baseball Property Usage. Mr. DaSilva felt that the whole School Committee needs to handle property usage as a whole. He felt that it is time for the School Committee to make a decision of who gets to use the property. He added that he will recuse himself because his child plays ball. He talked about his statement that he would not be taking the lead.**

**Next was Use of Property/Transfer Fields. Mrs. Reall stated that she is taking this item off the Agenda.**

**Next was Public Comments on Agenda Items 3-6. Mr. Aiello again identified himself about spoke about how disturbed he is about the conflict. He felt that the School Committee as a body must take care of governmental issues and there has to be a better way to handle this. Gina Picard identified herself and felt that it is necessary to have a dialogue. She spoke about the subcommittee that Dr. Pallotta was involved in and the fact that there was only one meeting.**

Chairman Martinelli asked how the Committee is supposed to fund the kindergarten when the Mayor keeps cutting our budget? Mr. DaSilva spoke about the fact that at the last meeting, a subcommittee was eliminated. He suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to look into this issue and volunteered to serve on the committee. Mr. Marciano added that he would like to hear everyone's views on this issue. Mr. Iannetta spoke about the fact that he is glad that it was mentioned that the Superintendent tried to put money in the budget but the Mayor cut 1.2 million dollars more. He felt that everyone would probably be in favor of full day kindergarten if we could come up with the funds. He concurred with Mr. DaSilva's comments that a committee should be formed and work with parents from the Town. Mr. Palmieri felt that a lottery system would be totally unfair and that he is tired of hearing that there is no money when there is a \$3,000,000.00 increase in contracts. He feels that full day kindergarten is very important. We always find the money for contracts. Mrs. Reall added that she cannot imagine anyone being against full day kindergarten. However, we need to be able to get the funding.

Next was Lights and Curfew at the Baseball Field. Mr. Hendricks passed out information to the members of the Committee. Mr. Hendricks identified himself and talked about the handout. He talked about a discussion with Vito Martinelli after the last council meeting and the suggestions that he made. Members of the Committee asked where the suggested listed came from. Mr. Palmieri expressed

concern with the fact that this is the first time he is seeing the list. He felt that it should be four nights because it is going to be difficult to get the games in.

Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Cataldi to approve the use of the high school field for three nights with a make up night on a Tuesday or a Thursday and all games to be in compliance with the Town curfew. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Cataldi, aye; Mrs. Reall, aye; Mr. DaSilva, recused; Mr. Marciano, aye; Chairman, aye; Mr. Iannetta, aye; Mr. Palmieri, nay. The motion carried by a vote of 5 to 1.

Next on the Agenda was New Business. First was Resignations. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended that the Committee approve the resignation of Leo Emery – NPHS Mock Trial Advisor effective at the end of the 2007/2008 School Year.

Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the resignation of Leo Emery – NPHS Mock Trial Advisor effective at the end of the 2007/2008 School Year.

Next was Leaves of Absence. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the Leave of Absence Request by Rita Cellucci – NPHS English Teacher for Unpaid FMLA effective April 22, 2008 through the end of the 2007/2008 School Year.

**Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to approve the Leave of Absence Request by Rita Cellucci – NPHS English Teacher for Unpaid FMLA effective April 22, 2008 through the end of the 2007/2008 School Year.**

**Next was Old Business. There being none, next was Use of Property Requests. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the Use of Property Requests as submitted with the additional requests.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the Use of Property Requests as submitted with the exception of the recreation department requests pending a dialog on their requests.**

**Next was Approval of Bills. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the List of Bills as presented.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mrs. Reall and Mr. Iannetta and carried to approve the March 20, 2008 List of Bills as presented.**

**Next was Approval of Minutes.**

**Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mr. Marciano and carried to approve the Minutes of the February 13, 2008 Budget Presentation with the changes.**

**Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mr. Marciano and carried to approve the Minutes of the February 27, 2008 Executive Session Meeting as presented and keep closed in accordance with R.I.G.L. 42-4-4 and 42-4-5.**

**Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mr. Marciano and carried to approve the Minutes of the Regular North Providence School Committee Meeting of February 27, 2008 subject to the corrections discussed.**

**Next was Public Comments on Agenda Items 7-12. There being none, the next item on the Agenda was Pending Business. Mr. Williams and Mr. Zammarelli asked for clarification regarding the use of the high school field. Mr. Zammarelli asked if it would be possible for the teams to work out the property usage among themselves.**

**Motion by Mr. Marciano, seconded by Mr. DaSilva and carried to allow them to work out the high school property schedule.**

**Next, Jeff Dominico spoke about the procedure and feels that public comments should be heard before the vote. Next, Nicholas Manfredi spoke about questions regarding harassment that happened to him and felt that he would like to make a statement. Chairman Martinelli asked legal counsel to speak regarding this. Mr. Scungio explained that the only thing you can comment on tonight is an item on the Agenda. Chairman Martinelli added that he would have the option of**

**requesting that something be placed on the Agenda at another meeting. Next was Pending Business. There being none,**

**Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Ronald Iannetta**